

The Role of Transparency and Accountability in Enhancing Public Trust in Government Institutions: Insights from Selected Students of Basilan State College

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Abstract— This study aims to explore the relationship between transparency and accountability in enhancing public trust in government institutions. Using a survey questionnaire, 200 randomly selected students from Basilan State College were asked about their perceptions with government institutions in terms of accountability and transparency. Results show that the majority of respondents believe that accountability and transparency significantly impact their trust in government institutions. To improve transparency and accountability, respondents recommended open data policies, increasing public participation, and improving access to information as possible mechanisms. However, some respondents still reported encountering unethical behaviors from their dealings with government institutions. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of transparency and accountability in building public trust in government institutions, and suggest several measures that can be taken to improve these aspects.

Keywords— Accountability, public trust, transparency.

I. INTRODUCTION

Trust in government institutions is a crucial aspect of a democratic society. When citizens trust their government, they are more likely to participate in the democratic process and follow laws and regulations. On the other hand, when trust in government is low, citizens may become disengaged from the democratic process, and the legitimacy of the government may be called into question. In recent years, there has been a growing body of research on the role of transparency and accountability in enhancing public trust in government institutions.

Transparency and accountability are essential elements in promoting public trust in government institutions. According to World Bank (2017), transparency refers to "the availability of information to the public about government policies, procedures, and decisions." Meanwhile, accountability refers to "the ability of citizens to hold government officials responsible for their actions." Studies have shown that when government institutions are transparent and accountable, citizens are more likely to trust them. The government institutions are responsible for providing essential services to the public, and transparency and accountability are necessary to ensure that these services are delivered efficiently and effectively. Public trust is critical in maintaining a healthy relationship between the government and the citizens it serves.

Without public trust, the government's ability to function effectively and efficiently is compromised, and the citizens' willingness to comply with laws and regulations is reduced.

In the Philippines, there have been several initiatives to promote transparency and accountability in government institutions. For example, the passage of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act in 2016 aims to provide the public with access to information held by government agencies. Similarly, the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees requires government officials to adhere to ethical standards and be accountable for their actions.

However, there have been concerns about transparency and accountability in government institutions raised by various stakeholders, including civil society organizations and the media. Corruption and unethical behavior in government institutions have been a persistent issue, which has undermined public trust in these institutions. As a result, many citizens are skeptical about the government's ability to deliver essential services and address their needs.

On one hand, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) play a crucial role in society, as they are responsible for producing the next generation of leaders and professionals. As such, it is important that these institutions are transparent and accountable to their stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and the general public. Studies have shown that transparency and accountability are essential for enhancing public trust in higher education institutions. For example, a study by Cabrera et al. (2018) found that perceived transparency and accountability in higher education institutions positively affect student trust and confidence in the institution. Similarly, a study by Jazul and Alontaga (2017) found that transparency and accountability are positively associated with institutional reputation and image.

The Basilan State College (BASC) is a government-run institution tasked with providing quality education to students in the province of Basilan. As a public institution, it is subject to the scrutiny of the public, and its actions and decisions can affect the lives of many people. It is therefore essential that it maintains the trust of the public it serves.

However, despite the efforts of the Philippine government to promote transparency and accountability in its institutions,

issues of corruption and unethical behavior persist, leading to a lack of public trust in these institutions. There is a need to assess the effectiveness of these initiatives in the specific context of BASC. Thus, this study aims to explore the role of transparency and accountability in enhancing public trust in government institutions among selected students of Basilan State College. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of selected students of Basilan State College regarding transparency and accountability in government institutions?
2. How does transparency and accountability affect the trust of selected students of Basilan State College in government institutions?
3. What measures can be implemented to improve transparency and accountability in government institutions and enhance public trust among selected students of Basilan State College?

This study is significant because it provides insights into the perceptions and experiences of selected students of Basilan State College with government institutions and the importance of transparency and accountability in building public trust. The findings of this study can be used by policymakers and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and implement measures that can enhance transparency and accountability in government institutions. The study also contributes to the body of knowledge on transparency and accountability in the Philippine context, which can be useful for future research.

II. METHODS

This study utilized descriptive research design using survey questionnaire to explore the role of transparency and accountability in enhancing public trust in government institutions among selected students of Basilan State College. A survey questionnaire was distributed to the respondents to collect data on their perceptions and experiences with government institutions.

The sampling technique used in this study is simple random sampling. Two hundred students from Basilan State College were randomly selected to participate in the survey. The sample size was determined based on the population size and the desired level of precision. The primary data for this study was collected through a survey questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions designed to gather information on the respondents' perceptions and experiences. The questionnaire was distributed and collected after completion.

The data collected from the survey questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The responses to the closed-ended questions were analyzed using frequency distributions and percentages. One limitation of this study is the sample size. The study only included two hundred students from Basilan State College, which may not be representative of the larger population. Another limitation is the potential for response bias, where participants may provide socially desirable responses.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

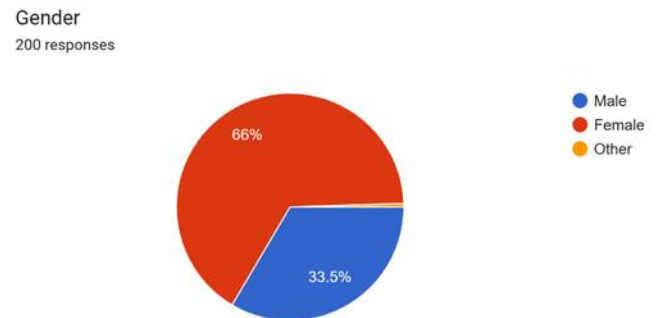


Figure 1. Gender Distribution

The results of the study show that a majority of the respondents were female, with only 33.5% male and the remaining percentage identifying as other sexual orientation.

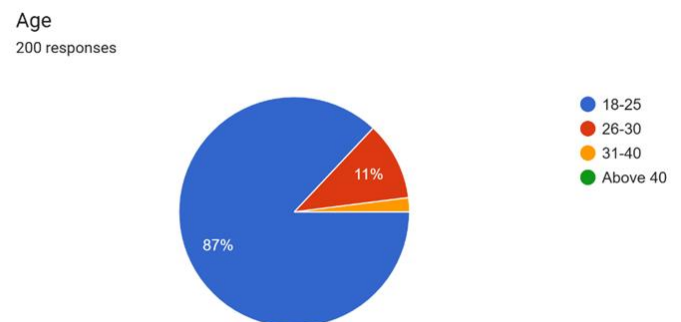


Figure 2. Age Distribution

A large majority of the respondents were between the ages of 18-25 years. The study found that 87% of the respondents were within this age range, while 11% were between the ages of 26-30 years and the remaining percent between 31-40 years.

The high percentage of respondents in the 18-25 age range is not surprising, given that Basilan State College is primarily an undergraduate institution. This age group typically represents the majority of students in higher education institutions. Additionally, younger participants may have been more interested in participating in the study, or may have had more free time to do so.

It is important to consider how age can influence the perceptions of transparency, accountability, and public trust in government institutions. For instance, younger participants may be more technologically-savvy and may have higher expectations for how information is accessed and shared. They may also be more likely to use social media and other online platforms to access information and share their opinions about government institutions. On the other hand, older participants may have more experience with government institutions and may have a better understanding of the complexities involved

in maintaining transparency and accountability. They may also have different expectations for how information is shared and accessed.

with government institutions may have higher expectations for transparency and accountability compared to those who rarely transact or never transact. This is because the more often individuals interact with government institutions, the more likely they are to experience any issues related to transparency and accountability.

Civil Status
200 responses

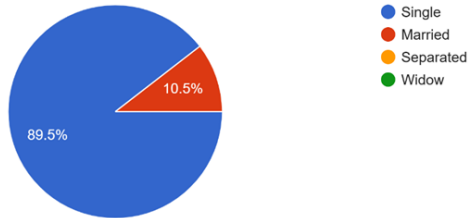


Figure 3. Civil Status Distribution

Majority of the respondents were single. Specifically, 89.5% reported being single, while 10.5% being married.

How frequently do you interact with government institutions (e.g., applying for permits, requesting documents, accessing public services, etc.)?
200 responses

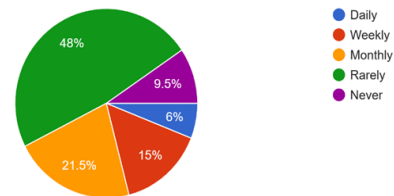


Figure 6. Survey Q1

The fact that a significant portion of the respondents (48%) reported rarely transacting with government institutions may indicate a lack of engagement with government institutions or a lack of awareness of the services they provide. This suggests that there is a need for government institutions to increase their efforts to engage with the public and make their services more accessible and understandable.

On the other hand, the fact that a substantial portion of the respondents (15% weekly and 6% daily) reported frequent transactions with government institutions highlights the importance of transparency and accountability in ensuring the public's trust in government institutions. These individuals may have firsthand experience with the importance of transparency and accountability in government transactions, and may have higher expectations for the quality of services provided by government institutions.

Course
200 responses

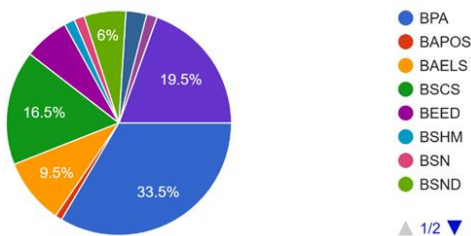


Figure 4. Course Distribution

Year Level
200 responses

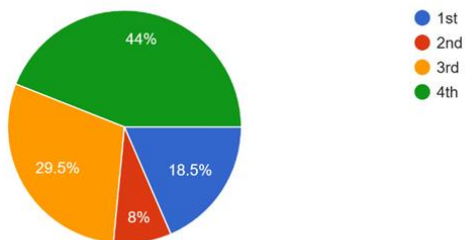


Figure 5. Year Level

The results of the study show that 48% of the respondents rarely transact with government institutions, while 21.5% transact monthly, 15% transact weekly, 9.5% never transact, and 6% transact daily with government institutions.

The frequency of transactions with government institutions is an important factor to consider in relation to transparency and accountability. Individuals who have frequent transactions

In your opinion, how transparent are government institutions in your community?
200 responses

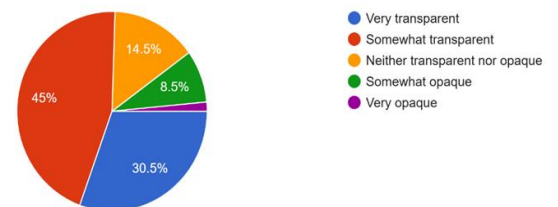


Figure 7. Survey Q2

Results show that 45% of the respondents believe that government institutions are somewhat transparent, 30.5% believe that they are very transparent, 14.5% believe that they are neither transparent nor opaque, and 8.5% believe that they are somewhat opaque.

The perception of government institutions' transparency is

an important factor that affects public trust. The fact that a significant portion of the respondents (45%) believe that government institutions are somewhat transparent may suggest that there is still room for improvement in terms of transparency and accountability. The respondents' perception of government institutions being somewhat transparent may indicate that while there are some efforts to promote transparency, these efforts may not be enough to fully satisfy the public's expectations for transparency and accountability.

On the other hand, the fact that 30.5% of the respondents believe that government institutions are very transparent is an encouraging finding. This indicates that there are government institutions that are taking steps to promote transparency and accountability, and these efforts are being recognized by the public. These institutions can serve as models for others to follow in promoting transparency and accountability.

The fact that 14.5% of the respondents believe that government institutions are neither transparent nor opaque may suggest a lack of clear information on the government's policies and procedures. This indicates that government institutions need to work on improving communication with the public, in order to provide clear information about their services, policies, and procedures.

Lastly, the fact that 8.5% of the respondents believe that government institutions are somewhat opaque may indicate a lack of effort in promoting transparency and accountability. This highlights the need for government institutions to prioritize transparency and accountability, in order to build and maintain public trust. Results of this study suggest that there is a need for government institutions to work on improving transparency and accountability, in order to build and maintain public trust. Government institutions that are already perceived as very transparent can serve as models for others to follow in promoting transparency and accountability.

Have you ever experienced any form of corruption or unethical behavior when dealing with government institutions?
200 responses

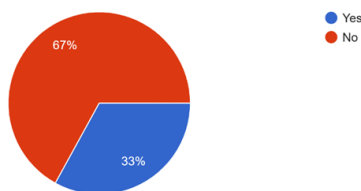


Figure 8. Survey Q3

The finding that 33% of the respondents have experienced some form of corruption or unethical behavior when dealing with government institutions is a cause for concern. Corruption and unethical behavior are major issues that hinder transparency and accountability in government institutions. The fact that a significant proportion of respondents have experienced these issues indicates that there is still a lot of work to be done in improving transparency and accountability

in government institutions.

It is important to note that the remaining 67% of the respondents did not experience corruption or unethical behavior when dealing with government institutions. This could suggest that there are some institutions that are doing a better job of ensuring transparency and accountability. It is important to study these institutions to identify best practices that can be replicated in other institutions. Overall, the study highlights the importance of transparency and accountability in enhancing public trust in government institutions. The findings suggest that there is a need to implement measures to improve transparency and accountability, such as open data policies, public participation, and access to information. Additionally, efforts should be made to address corruption and unethical behavior to improve public trust in government institutions.

How important is it to you that government institutions are accountable for their actions?
200 responses

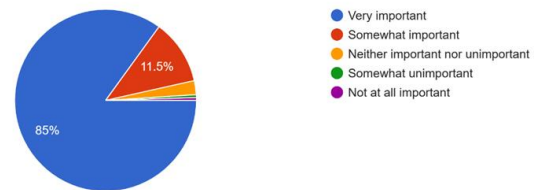


Figure 9. Survey Q4

Figure 9 shows that 85% of the respondents believe that it is important for government institutions to be accountable for their actions. Accountability is a fundamental principle of good governance, and it is essential for ensuring that government institutions are responsive to the needs of their citizens. The fact that such a large majority of respondents believe in the importance of accountability suggests that there is a strong desire among citizens for transparency and accountability in government institutions.

The 11.5% of respondents who think that accountability is somewhat important may have varying levels of understanding of what accountability means in the context of government institutions. It is important to educate citizens on the importance of accountability and its role in ensuring good governance. Hence, it can be said that this finding reinforces the importance of transparency and accountability in enhancing public trust in government institutions. Government institutions should prioritize efforts to improve transparency and accountability to address citizens' concerns and build trust in the government.

Figure 10 shows that 54% of the respondents believe that the level of transparency and accountability in government institutions affects their level of trust in them is an important result that highlights the link between transparency, accountability, and public trust. It suggests that citizens place great importance on the transparency and accountability of government institutions in determining their trust in these

institutions.

How does the level of transparency and accountability of government institutions affect your level of trust in them?
200 responses

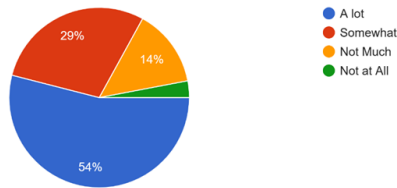


Figure 10. Survey Q5

The 29% of respondents who believe that the level of transparency and accountability in government institutions somewhat affects their level of trust, and the 14% who do not believe that it affects their trust, may have varying reasons for their views. It is important to understand the reasons behind these opinions and to address any concerns or misconceptions that may exist. The finding that a majority of respondents believe that the level of transparency and accountability in government institutions affects their level of trust in them underscores the importance of efforts to improve transparency and accountability in government institutions. Such efforts can play a significant role in enhancing public trust in government institutions, which can ultimately lead to better governance and improved outcomes for citizens.

Have you ever accessed any government information through official government websites or other channels?
200 responses

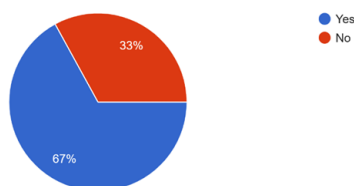


Figure 11. Survey Q6

If yes, how easy was it to access the information?
200 responses

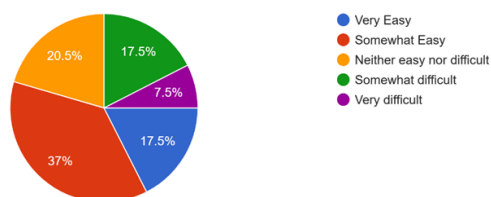


Figure 12. Survey Q7

Figure 11 and 12 indicate that a majority of the respondents were able to access government information through government websites and other channels. This is a positive

sign as it shows that government institutions are taking steps towards ensuring transparency and accountability by making information easily accessible to the public. However, it is concerning to note that 25% of the participants found accessing the information difficult or very difficult.

It is important for government institutions to take steps to ensure that information is easily accessible to the public, as it is a crucial element in building public trust. This could be done through the implementation of open data policies, which was suggested by a majority of the participants in the study. By making data available to the public in a user-friendly format, government institutions can improve transparency and accountability, and in turn, enhance public trust. Additionally, steps should be taken to improve the ease of access to government information. This could be done by simplifying the language used in official documents, improving the functionality of government websites, and providing training and support for citizens who may not be familiar with accessing information online. By taking these steps, government institutions can improve transparency and accountability, and build trust with the public.

In your opinion, what measures/actions can government institutions take to improve transparency and accountability? (Select 3 options, the most)
200 responses

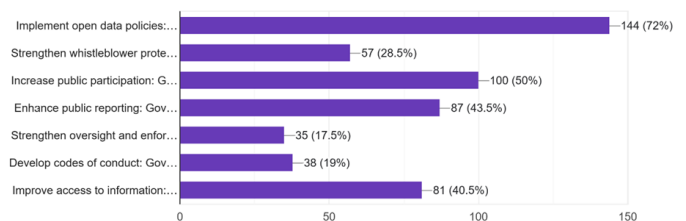


Figure 13. Survey Q8

Figure 13 indicates that a majority of respondents recommended the implementation of open data policies, followed by increasing public participation and improving access to information, as measures to improve accountability and transparency. These recommendations are consistent with best practices in good governance and have been shown to be effective in enhancing public trust in government institutions.

The fact that most respondents recommended the implementation of open data policies suggests that there is a need to make more data available to the public. Open data policies involve the release of government data in a format that is easily accessible, downloadable, and can be used for analysis by anyone. This can help increase transparency and accountability by making it easier for the public to monitor the activities of government institutions and hold them accountable for their actions.

The recommendation to increase public participation also highlights the need to involve its stakeholders in decision-making processes. This can help build trust and legitimacy by giving citizens and other stakeholders a voice in governance.

Government institutions can achieve this by creating opportunities for stakeholders to participate in decision-making processes, such as through town hall meetings, public hearings, and online consultations.

Finally, the recommendation to improve access to information highlights the importance of making information easily accessible to stakeholders. This can be achieved by improving the government’s websites and making information about its activities, policies, and decision-making processes more readily available. By doing so, it can promote transparency and accountability and help build public trust. In conclusion, the recommendations provided by the respondents in the study highlight the need to prioritize transparency and accountability in its policies and practices. By implementing open data policies, increasing public participation, and improving access to information, government institutions can build a more positive reputation, enhance public trust, and ultimately contribute to the overall development of the community it serves.

level of trust. This finding reinforces the argument that transparency and accountability are key drivers of public trust in government institutions.

Moreover, the study found that a considerable percentage of the respondents (67%) were able to access government information from various channels, including government websites. However, some respondents found accessing the information somewhat or very difficult. This result highlights the need to improve access to information in government institutions and suggests that implementing open data policies and improving access to information can enhance transparency and accountability, thereby improving public trust in government institutions.

Overall, the study’s findings underscore the importance of transparency and accountability in enhancing public trust in government institutions. The recommendations made by the respondents to improve transparency and accountability, such as implementing open data policies and increasing public participation, can serve as a guide for policymakers and government officials in addressing issues of transparency and accountability in government institutions.

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Do you think increased transparency and accountability of government institutions would enhance public trust in them?
200 responses

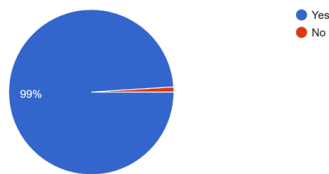


Figure 14. Survey Q9

The finding that 99% of the respondents believe that increased transparency and accountability would enhance public trust in government institutions is a significant result in the study. This result shows that the majority of the respondents recognize the importance of transparency and accountability in building trust in government institutions.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

It is noteworthy that the respondents' perception of transparency and accountability in government institutions is linked to their level of trust in them. The results indicate that 54% of the respondents believe that the level of transparency and accountability in government institutions affects their